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Your Reference: P353131GB
Application No: GB0522230.2

The Patent Office
Patents Directorate

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31 January 2006

Dear Sirs

Patents Act 1977:
Combined Search and Examination Report under Sections 17 and 18(3)

Latest date for reply:

9 November 2006

I enclose two copies of my search and examination report and a copy of the citations.

By the above date you should either file amendments to meet the objections in the report or make observations on them. If you do not, the application may be refused.

Other search results

If you have applied to another patent office for a patent for this invention you will be receiving from them the results of their search. If you decide to proceed with the present application you are asked to provide me with a copy of any such official search report; or to email identifying details of the cited documents (including any category assigned in the report) to the email address above.

Cut-off date This request applies to search reports that you have received before the date when you send a response to our first examination report under section 18(3) or section 18(4); if you make no response to an initial section 18(4) report the cut-off date is two months after the date of that report. Tell us about a search report sooner rather than later if that would allow it to be considered during our first examination.

[†]Use of E-mail: Please note that e-mail should be used for correspondence only.



Exceptions You do not have to supply details of a search report that (1) shows a nil response, or (2) has been published by WIPO or EPO, or (3) you have already supplied to us on a previous GB application.

Publication

I estimate that, provided you have met all the formal requirements, preparations for publication of your application will be completed soon after **4 April 2006**. At this time you will receive a letter confirming the exact date when the preparations for publication will be completed. This letter will also tell you the publication number and date of publication of your application.

Withdrawal/amendment

If you wish to withdraw your application before it is published you must do so before the preparations for publication are complete. **WARNING** – after preparations for publication are complete it will NOT be possible to withdraw your application from publication.

If you wish to file amended claims for inclusion with the published application you must do so before the preparations for publication are completed. If you write to the Office less than 3 weeks before 4 April 2006 please mark your letter prominently:

"URGENT - PUBLICATION IMMINENT".

Yours faithfully

Monty Siddique
Examiner

Important information about combined search and examination

I also ask that you take note of the following points. These might have a bearing on the future stages of your application because the examination report has been sent to you before your application has been published.

- (a) You may file voluntary amendments before making a full response to my examination report. We will publish with your application any new or amended claims you file voluntarily or as a full response, provided that they are received before preparations for publication are completed. It would help us when you file amendments before publication if you could **prominently indicate** in a covering letter whether or not the amendments are intended as a full response to the examination report.
- (b) If you file a full response to the examination report before your application is published I will consider it as soon as possible. However, if this would disrupt the publication of your application, I would have to delay



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taking any action until the application had been published. This delay could be up to 3 months, depending upon when we receive your response.

- (c) There is another situation when there might be a delay between you filing a full response and the Patent Office responding to it. This would arise if you met all my objections but your application had not or had only recently been published. I could not report the outcome of my re-examination until I was satisfied that the search was complete for documents published before the priority date of your invention and that anybody interested in the application has had three months following publication of the application to make observations on the patentability of your invention.
- (d) Provided that the requirements of the Act have been met, I can send your application to grant as early as three months after publication. Before doing so I will bring the original search up to date and raise with you any further objection that might result from this top-up search. However, there is a possibility that at that time I may not have access to all the patent applications published after the priority date of your invention and of possible relevance to your application. If this is the case I would have to complete the search after grant and if necessary raise any new found novelty objection then.



Application No: GB0522230.2

Examiner: Monty Siddique

Claims searched: 1 at least

Date of search: 24 January 2006

Patents Act 1977: Search Report under Section 17

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Relevant to claims	Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance
X	1, 2, 4, 5 at least	JP2003103676 A (INOAC CORP) see abstract
X	1, 2, 4 at least	EP0410553 A2 (LIGNOTOK GMBH) elastomeric foamed cover portion injection moulded on substrate 3
X	1, 2, 4 at least	JP08183059 A (TOKAI CHEMICAL) see abstract; skin 2, foam 21, substrate 41, 1
X,P	1, 5 at least	GB2403683 A (LEAR CORP.) substrate 46; cover 40 comprising elastomeric foam 54
X	1, 2 at least	EP1182024 A1 (VISTEON) entire document; substrate 33, inner soft core, outer skin 26 etc.
X	1, 5 at least	US6248200 B1 (CHRYSLER) substrate 26; elastomeric cover 28, 30, 33 with foam
X	1, 3, 4 at least	US6136415 A (R&S TECHNIK GMBH) substrate 9; cover portion comprising cover film 11 and elastomeric foam 10; vacuum thermoforming cover portion and substrate and heat laminating them together
X	1, 5 at least	US5626382 A (LEAR CORP.) substrate 18; cover 14 comprising elastomeric foam 12 between substrate 18 and cover part 16
X	1, 4 at least	US5407225 A (DAVIDSON TEXTRON) substrate 18 covered by elastomeric urethane foam layer 44 comprising a thermoplastics skin 46
X	1 at least	US4330584 A (VAN DRESSER CORP.) substrate layer 12; cover member comprising a flexible cover layer 16 and elastomeric foam 14

Categories:

X Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive A Document indicating technological background and/or state



step	of the art.
Y Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
& Member of the same patent family	E Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.

Field of Search:

Search of GB, EP, WO & US patent documents classified in the following areas of the UKC^X :

B5A

Worldwide search of patent documents classified in the following areas of the IPC

B29C; B29D; B32B; B60J; B60R

The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report

WPI EPODOC



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Patents Act 1977 Combined Search and Examination Report under Sections 17 & 18(3)

Plurality of invention

1. Your claims define two separate inventions not forming a single inventive concept.
The inventions are:

- (a) as defined in claim 1 and claims appended thereto and relating to a cover member comprising an elastomeric foam and supported on a predetermined area of a substrate, which forms at least part of a structural support of a trim assembly and
- (b) as set out in claims 6 and 14 and claims appended thereto and relating to methods of forming automotive interior trim assemblies, but where the substrate is moulded before the moulding of the cover thereto.

The above opinion has been reinforced on the grounds that the cited documents anticipate the common subject matter of the independent claims. Moreover, the article of claim 1 may be manufactured by methods other than those defined in claims 6 and 14, as also confirmed by the documents found. In at least some of the documents, the sequence of steps is reverse of that prescribed in claims 6 and 14, the moulding of the substrate occurring after that of the cover portion. It is also pointed out that the technique of moulding, as set out in claims 6 and 14 is not new and a separate search will be required to provide documentary evidence for the use of such techniques, but maybe for manufacturing different articles.

You will need to amend your claims, so that they relate to only one invention or inventive concept. You will also need to make consequential amendments to the description. You may wish to consider filing a divisional application. Any such application should normally be filed no later than 3 months before the expiry of the period for putting the present application in order.

Scope of search

2. In accordance with Section 17(6), only the first of these inventions has been searched. The other invention can be searched if you wish. In this case you will have to file a further Form 9A/77.

What this report covers

3. I have not been able to consider the novelty or obviousness of the unsearched invention.



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[Examination Report contd.]

Novelty

4. The invention as defined in claims 1-5 at least is not new because it has already been disclosed in each of the following documents:

JP2003103676 A (INOAC CORP) see abstract

EP0410553 A2 (LIGNOTOK GMBH) elastomeric foamed cover portion, which is injection-moulded on substrate 3

JP08183059 A (TOKAI CHEMICAL) see abstract; skin 2, foam 21, substrate 41, 1

*GB2403683 A (LEAR CORP.) substrate 46; cover 40 comprising elastomeric foam 54

EP1182024 A1 (VISTEON) entire document; substrate 33, inner soft core, outer skin 26 etc.

US6248200 B1 (CHRYSLER) substrate 26; elastomeric cover 28, 30, 33 with foam

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US5626382 A (LEAR CORP.) substrate 18; cover 14 comprising elastomeric foam 12 between substrate 18 and cover part 16

US5407225 A (DAVIDSON TEXTRON) substrate 18 covered by elastomeric urethane foam layer 44 comprising a thermoplastics skin 46

US4330584 A

(VAN DRESSER CORP.) substrate layer 12; cover member comprising a flexible cover layer 16 and elastomeric foam 14

No amendment of your claims will be needed in respect of the document marked * if you can show that the priority date of your invention is not later than the priority date of the relevant disclosure in that document.

Clarity

5. The expression "spirit and", appearing at lines 12 and 10 of pages 3 and 4 respectively, introduces ambiguity into the extent of the monopoly sought and should be removed.



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[Examination Report contd.]

NONE TO CONTINUE.